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Synopses of Important Articles.

The Apostle John.*—It is difficult to express one's idea of this apostle because of the singular spiritual elevation of his character—that element which made him dear to his Master. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, probably younger than his brother James. Salome, whose nature was an enthusiastically religious one, doubtless exercised much influence over his development. He was not a learned man. His writings show it, for had he been trained in the schools and not by contact with nature and man we would never have had the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. He was a disciple of the Baptist and tells us many things that could have come only from a sympathetic eye-witness of his work. Then he became a disciple of Jesus who at once took him to His heart "because he so leaned on Him and clung to Him." The other disciples seem to have seen how appropriate this relation was and never murmur at it. After the death of Christ he is found at Jerusalem as one of the pillars of the church, apparently not yet having comprehended the entirely independent character of Christianity. Tradition tells us that he long lived at Ephesus and there was buried. In his character is noticed (1) his idealistic nature. He belongs less to the age in which he lived than to the ages that followed him. He sees Jesus with the eye of intuition, his thought clothes itself in general terms. (2) He was contemplative rather than energetic. Yet he was not supine. His feelings flowed deep and strong and expressed themselves sometimes in passionate vehemence of devotion to Christ and indignation against His enemies. (3) He was gentle, womanly, though not timid or effeminate. (4) His nature was preëminently receptive. This is why he was drawn to Jesus and Jesus to him; why he has revealed the heart of Jesus most fully. (5) On this trait of character depend others—his simplicity, sublimity, pathos—all rising out of his absorption of devotion to Christ. These are some of the features of character in the man, from whose thoughts and representation of Christ the deeper and more living theology for which we are anxiously longing, will spring.

A deeply clear and beautiful picture which will hardly bear reduction to the miniature here given.

Polytheism in Primitive Israel.† The use of the term *Elohim* in Gen. 1, is a proof that there was a time when those who then applied it to the one God of Israel, had in the past employed it in its natural meaning of "gods." Other passages indicate it, e. g. "let us make man." The Canaanites are found to use the plural "gods" for the singular, "god" and the Israelites adopted their language. When the term "El" began to be avoided by writers, "elohim" took its place, but though used of the national God, the term implies polytheism in those who used it. That the earliest users of it were affected with some elements of polytheism is seen in the teraphim-worship, and the worship of the high places which died out in Judah first owing to the centralizing of worship at Jerusalem. The frequent lapses of the nation into idolatry show that the old national habits of polytheism still remained. Though there were monotheistic elements in the

* By Rev. Professor William Milligan, D.D., in *The Expositor*, Nov. 1889, pp. 321-341.

† By Rev. Professor A. H. Sayce, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1889, pp. 25-36.